

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 21 with the following amended paragraph:

The preferred framework includes side horizontal struts 18 extending longitudinally with respect to the scooter, and preferably near the bottom portion near the bottom of the frame. The side struts 18 are connected to front and rear lateral struts 20 and front and rear upright struts 22,24. The front upright struts 22 are connected at an upper end at a head tube 26, which is configured for rotatably receiving a steering tube to connect to a steerable wheel. The rear lateral strut 20 is preferably wide and curved to protect the bottom rear edge of the frame interior. Preferably, the rear upright struts 24 are also connected by another horizontal rear strut ~~30~~ 28 disposed preferably near the lower end of the rear upright struts 24.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in Fig. 4, the struts 16 can be manufactured as individual members that are welded to each other, or assemblies of several struts can be manufactured as unitary or integral parts and then attached to the remaining struts. For instance, in the embodiment of Fig. 4, rear struts 20,24,28,~~30~~ are cast as a single rectangular piece 38, which can also include attachments and pivots for other parts of the scooter, such as one or more swing arms. In addition, the embodiment of this figure has an additional strut, which is a laterally extending front cross-brace 40 that is welded midway vertically between the front upright struts 22, preferably near a bend in the struts 22 where struts 22 bend towards each other in an upward direction towards the head tube 26. The front lower strut 42 in this embodiment is also a cross brace or connecting strap welded to the front of the bottom side tubes 18.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

The framework defines opening 61 between the struts 16, which are mostly or substantially entirely closed off by skin members. Preferably at least 75% of the openings are closed off, and more preferably at least about 90%. As shown in Fig. 6, the hollow interior 120 contains several sets of batteries 70 that are preferably encased in battery envelopes. Preferably, there are three layers of four battery envelopes apiece, although the entire set of batteries can be made as a monoblock in one embodiment. The batteries are connected to each other and to a controller 132, which controls the current flow to the motor depending on operator inputs that are made on controls, such as the throttle of the vehicle. The preferred controller includes cooling fins 134 that are preferably aligned in an upright direction to promote upward airflow along the fins 134, and the controller assembly can be used to close off the rear opening 61 between the rear frame members. Additionally, a set of capacitors 136 connected to the controller can also be positioned adjacent the cooling fins on the rear of the frame. An air circulation device, such as a fan assembly 138, is preferably positioned in fluid communication within the frame interior 120, such as below the seat supporting skin member of the upper frame portion and above the batteries 70 to circulate the air within the frame interior 120 as may be desired such as for cooling or venting. As shown, the batteries 70 are preferably aligned longitudinally, such that they present a narrow lateral profile. The batteries can be stacked vertically within the frame interior 120 as well. Thus, the batteries in the preferred frame do not protrude laterally beyond the foot rests 122. Skin members 50 include side panels configured for closing off the sides of the interior cavity of the frame, just as the skin member 48 closes off the front, bottom, and lower portions of the side or rear to protect the batteries, which can be nickel metal hydride or other suitable and preferably rechargeable battery type. In another embodiment, a different energy source can be housed within the frame, such as a fuel cell, a fuel tank, or combinations of several energy sources, which can include batteries. The rear skin portion is preferably attached to the rear of the frame to close off the gap between rear struts 20,24,28,30. The assembled frame and portions attached thereto preferably isolate the batteries and sensitive electronics or other parts in the frame interior.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

In the preferred embodiments, the upper frame portion increases the stiffness of the frame when it is associated with the lower frame portion, and preferably the torsional stiffness, ~~not~~ most preferably about a substantially longitudinal axis extending front to back. The torsional stiffness of the frame is preferably increased by a factor of at least about 1.2, more preferably at least about 1.5, more preferably at least about 2.0, more preferably at least about 2.5, compared to the torsional stiffness of the lower frame portion alone. Most preferably, the improvement in strut and stiffness provided by the upper frame member is less than a factor of about ten and more preferably less than a factor of about six.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

In certain embodiments, the bending stiffness of the frame can also be substantially improved by the coupled upper frame portion. In an alternative embodiment, the upper frame portion can include a rigid framework of struts, which is preferably torsionally stiffened by skim members. As seen, for example in Figs. 1 and 13, the upper side struts 32 run longitudinally and are spaced from each other substantially on opposite sides of the hollow interior cavity 120. The lower frame portion 14 of this embodiment is supported on the vehicle wheels such that the upper side struts 32 are in compression, and the upper frame portion 12 extends over and across the interior cavity 120 and is structurally associated with the longitudinal portions for substantially increasing the stiffness thereof.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 24 with the following amended paragraph:

The general configuration of the preferred frame includes the ~~genuinely~~ generally horizontal and preferably flat upper surface of the upper frame member where the seat is attached and supported. The stepthrough and the frame is provided to enable the complete stepthrough including fairings and the assembled scooter to have a height of less than about 75% of the height of the seat above the foot rests. The preferred rear and front upright struts are inclined rearwards and forwards, respectively, in an upward direction, and

the head tube is inclined forward a downward direction. Additionally, the rear of the upper side struts are inclined upwards towards the rear of the frame, while the forward portion thereof is generally horizontal. The preferred width of the frame interior or of the frame excluding the footrests is preferably at least about 4 inches, more preferably at least about 6 inches, preferably at most about 10 inches, more preferably at most about 9 inches at the stepthrough. With fairings, the preferred width is at least about 7 inches and at most about 12 inches at the stepthrough preferably where the rider sits or where his legs are placed. The front upright struts are also preferably configured to provide a narrower width at the top than at the bottom of the frame, as the preferred battery arrangement and the upper levels of the frame interior positions the batteries towards the rear of the frame.